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STATE AID FOR SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION AND PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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This study presents information concerning State school funds provided specifically for consolidated schools and pupil transportation in the United States and the conditions under which they are granted. Such funds are provided, as shown by Tables 1, 2, and 3, in 27 States. All funds apportioned to consolidated schools and for pupil transportation from State sources are not included. In practically all States consolidated schools share under certain bases of apportionment exactly as others and in a number of States considerable aid is allowed for the expense of transporting pupils to school along with other general items of expense.

Statutory provision for apportioning State aid in a number of instances is such as to encourage the consolidation movement without defining in detail the conditions under which grants are made or specifying the amount of aid. For example, the Oklahoma statutes authorize the State board of education "to withhold [State] aid from any district when it is apparent to said board, because of the small attendance in any district, that transfer and transportation of all the pupils to an adjacent school would be the most advisable and economical program for said district."

The "Unified educational program," enacted by the Alabama legislature in 1927, in defining the method of apportioning the equalization fund, allows one elementary teacher unit for a 1-teacher school only

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when satisfactory evidence has been submitted to the State department of education showing that consolidation is impracticable. The Ohio school law authorized the State director of education to fix a tentative salary, contingent, and transportation expense schedule for districts which participate in the State equalization fund.

Obviously it is not the purpose of this study to include all State moneys paid to consolidated schools or for pupil transportation. Only the State funds which are provided specifically and in definite amount for the purposes named are considered.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AND AMOUNTS OF STATE AID FOR CURRENT EXPENSES [1]

State funds provided for the encouragement of consolidation and for current expenses in consolidated schools are apportioned in most cases only to local taxing units which meet certain standards. Table 1 shows that 15 States provide aid for schools in consolidated districts and gives the chief statutory provisions under which the grants are made. Two States, Tennessee and Washington, provide aid to consolidated schools, but the amount is not specified in either case. Few required standards are named in the statutes in Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia. Participating schools in one State, Maine, must be approved as part of a complete town (township) plan for consolidation; in another, Texas, as a part of a similar plan for an entire county.

District and school-ground areas.—It will be seen that the legal minimum areas for consolidated districts receiving consolidation aid in 6 States vary from 16 to 36 square miles. The required minimum areas for school grounds vary from 1 acre in Texas to 5 acres in Iowa, Michigan, and South Dakota. This requirement is a State department of education ruling in Iowa.

Tax levies.—Column 4 shows that minimum local school-tax levies for districts receiving consolidation aid are mentioned in the laws of six States. The legal maximum rate is required in only one of the five which seems to indicate that the primary purpose for granting the funds is to encourage the consolidation of schools rather than to equalize school costs.

School terms, subjects, and qualifications for teachers.—Column 5 shows that a 9½-month term is a legal requirement in 1 State, a 9-month term in 4, and an 8-month term in 3 other States for schools participating in the State aid funds. Column 6 lists the special subjects requirements named in the laws of six States relative to consolidation aid. Teacher qualifications (see column 7) is mentioned in the laws of five States as a special requirement for receiving aid. This is chiefly preparation to teach the special subject requirements.

[1] Does not include State aid for pupil transportation.

TABLE 1.—*Legal requirements for and amounts of State aid for consolidation in 15 States* [1]

State	Requirements								Annual amount of State aid granted per school (in dollars)
	Minimum area for district (in square miles)	Minimum area for school grounds (in acres)	Local tax levy specified (yes or no)	Minimum length of term (in months)	Special courses (by subjects)	Special training for teachers (yes or no)	Transportation	Minimum number of teachers	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Georgia	------	------	Yes	------	------	Yes	No	[2] 4	500
								4	1,000
Iowa	16	[3] 5	No	------	Agriculture, home economics, manual training, or other industrial and vocational subjects.	Yes	Yes	2	[4] 450
								3	850
								4	1,250
Maine	------	------	No	7½	------	No	Yes	------	[5] 500
Michigan	[6] 18	5	No	9	Agriculture, manual training, home economics.	------	Yes	3	1,000
Missouri	------	------	Yes	8	Agriculture [7]	Yes	Yes	1	[8] 300
Nebraska	[9] 25	------	No	------	Agriculture, home economics, or other industrial and vocational subjects.	Yes	Yes	2	[4] 250
								3	350
								4	550
New York	------	------	Yes	9½	------	No	Yes	2	------
North Dakota	18	2	No [10]	9	Agriculture, domestic science	------	Yes	2	[10] 200
								3	250
								4	300
Rhode Island	------	------	Yes	9	------	------	Yes	2	[11] 100
South Dakota	[12a] 18	2	No	9	Agriculture, home economics	Yes	Yes	2	250
								4	400
Do	[12b] 25	5	No	9	Agriculture, home economics, manual training.	Yes	Yes	7	600
Tennessee [13]	------	------	Yes	8	------	No	No	[3] 3	------
Texas	------	1	Yes	------	------	------	No	3	[14] 500
Washington	------	------	No	------	------	------	No	------	[15]
West Virginia	------	------	No	------	------	------	Yes	2	600
									800
Wisconsin	36	------	------	8	------	------	Yes	2	900
								3	1,200
								4	1,500

[1] Does not include State aid for transportation and buildings.
[2] A 4-year high school.
[3] State department ruling.
[4] Includes amount granted for equipment when school is organized.
[5] Funds granted to a town when a complete consolidation plan is approved.
[6] A valuation of $700,000 or an area of 18 sections.
[7] Required in high-school departments only.
[8] Not more than $300 to any elementary school located in a district in which there is no incorporated town, village, or city.
[9] May contain less, if approved by State superintendent.
[10] Amounts are doubled if local tax rate is between 4 and 7 mills and trebled if tax rate is 7 mills or more.
[11] $100 annually is granted to a town district for each school consolidated.
[12a] Elementary districts.
[12b] High-school districts.
[13] Tennessee grants 2½ per cent of current elementary State school fund for encouragement of standardization, consolidation, and supervision.
[14] Rural high school districts receive $500 for each component elementary school.
[15] Consolidated districts are allotted extra units of attendance as bases for State aid.

Transportation of pupils.—Column 8 shows that in 11 States pupils must be transported to school in districts receiving consolidation aid. The requirement applies only to distances greater than a specified minimum in each case. This service is either permitted or required in the remaining States, but it is not designated as a requirement for State aid.

Size of school as basis for apportionment.—The minimum size in number of teachers for schools receiving the aid is either specified or

implied in the statutes of each of 13 States (see column 9); in eight of these the size of the school as measured by number of teachers is the basis for apportionment. The requirement varies from 1 to 4 elementary teachers for elementary schools and is 7 teachers for a school of 12 grades in 1 State.

In amount the aid ranges from $100 to more than $400 per teacher. Two States, Iowa and Nebraska, make substantial grants for equipment when a school is established, and for current expenses annually thereafter.

State aid not to exceed $500 in any one year is apportioned to any town in Maine when a definite plan for consolidating the schools, and other projects especially worthy of encouragement have been approved by the State department of education, provided, that the total amount for this purpose shall not exceed 10 per cent of the State's equalization fund.

Missouri grants aid, not to exceed $300 per school, in any consolidated district in which no incorporated town, village, or city is located equal to the difference between all available funds (including a maximum local school-tax levy) and its elementary school maintenance costs, some of which are specified by law. Any other consolidated district of the State, maintaining a high school, and offering at least 1 year of agriculture, is granted aid equal to the difference between all available funds (including the proceeds of a 10-mill tax levy) and the sum required to maintain its school—based on average daily attend. ance and a $50 per pupil cost, provided that when the local school levy is 6.5 mills, the maintenance cost is considered $40 per pupil.

New York pays central rural school districts much more State aid than it does other shool districts.

They are allowed the apportionment that would be paid to each district included in the centralization besides an equalization quota for the district as a whole, which is based on the average attendance and full valuation of the entire district.[3]

Rhode Island pays any town which consolidates 3 or more ungraded schools and establishes a graded school with 2 or more teachers, $100 annually per teacher employed, provided the attendance does not fall below 20 pupils per teacher. The same amount is paid to a town annually for each ungraded school which is consolidated with a graded school. That is, on the per teacher basis no reduction is made when consolidation reduces the number of teaching units.

Tennessee apportions 2½ per cent of the general State school fund annually for the encouragement of standardization, consolidation, and supervision of rural elementary schools. The funds are distributed under the regulations of the State department of education. Funds for these purposes amounted to $75,000 for each of the fiscal years 1929 and 1930.

[3] Statement in letter from the New York Education Department, Jan. 13, 1931.

The State of Washington apportions the annual State school fund chiefly on the basis of school attendance. Consolidated districts are credited with 2,000 days attendance for each component district less one, in addition to the actual attendance in the consolidated schools. The aid amounted to $220,306.56 for the year 1928–29.

STATE AID FOR BUILDINGS IN CONSOLIDATED DISTRICTS

The policy of granting State funds for capital outlays for public schools is not general. The opinion seems to prevail in most States that local funds, supplemented by long-time loans from State funds, are sufficient provision for rural school building needs.

Table 2 names the eight States in which legal provision is made for State aid specifically for building purposes in consolidated districts, shows how such funds may be used, and gives the bases for apportionment and amount of aid granted. Funds are provided for the construction of buildings in each of these States, and, in addition, for equipment in Wisconsin, and for grounds and equipment in Delaware.

TABLE 2.—*State aid for buildings in consolidated school districts*

State	Granted for—	Amount
1	2	3
Arkansas	Erection of school buildings in natural school centers, in order that high-school advantages may be placed in reach of all boys and girls.	Amount needed, as determined by State board of education, after local sources have been exhausted. One-fourth of $3,000,000 appropriated for this purpose for biennium ending June 30, 1931.
Delaware	Encouragement of consolidation of schools by State appropriations for new buildings and grounds.	Such part of total building cost as State board of education determines.
Minnesota	Erection of school buildings	40 per cent of cost, not to exceed $3,000 for any one building.
Missouri	Erection of a central high-school building.	One-fourth cost—maximum grant to any 1 district, $2,000.
New York	Erection, enlargement, or remodeling of school buildings.[1]	One-fourth sum actually expended.
Oklahoma	Construction or payment for school buildings.	50 per cent of cost not to exceed $2,500 for a 3-room building and $1,250 for a 2-room building.
South Carolina	Erection of buildings where 2 or more schools have been united into 1.	$50 for each building in addition to the regular State aid for buildings.
Wisconsin	Erection and equipment of buildings.	$10,000 annually appropriated as follows: One-half cost not to exceed amounts to schools as follows: Schools with (*a*) 1 teacher, $1,000; (*b*) 2 teachers, $1,500; (*c*) 3 teachers, $2,000; (*d*) 4 or more teachers, in a district formed by uniting 3 or more districts, $3,000; (*e*) elementary and secondary graded schools formed by uniting all the districts of a township, $5,000.

[1] In central rural districts.

The basis for apportionment in five States is the actual building cost within prescribed limits; in two of these the amounts vary with the size of buildings. In South Carolina a definite sum, in addition to the regular State aid for buildings, is granted when two or more schools have been united and a new building erected. The amounts granted range from $50 per building in one State to 50 per cent of the actual amount expended in another State.

STATE AID FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION IN 17 STATES

Table 3 shows that the laws of 17 States provide for definite grants for pupil transportation expense. The amounts granted, in proportion to the total expenditure for transportation, vary widely among them. One State pays the entire cost of transporting pupils to school; a few pay less than 1 per cent of the cost. Some States provide funds for this purpose as a part of a general equalization policy; others make grants more definitely for the purpose of aiding weak districts. In some, all pupil transportation expense is shared by the State; in others the use of the State funds is limited to certain designated pupil transportation expense. The apportionment is usually based, within prescribed limits, on the actual transportation cost; two States make the apportionment on the basis of pupil transportation vehicles used. Generally when any considerable proportion of the expense is paid by the State, the transportation must be approved by the State department of education.

TABLE 3.—*State aid for pupil transportation in 17 States*

State	Transportation for which grants are made	Minimum distance for which State funds are allowed (in miles)	Grants	Total 1928–29 (in dollars)
1	2	3	4	5
Connecticut	To a high school in an adjoining town, when no local high school is maintained.	(1)	One half cost not to exceed $35 per pupil annually.	14,004
Delaware	To any school	1	Total cost, but no more than 6.3 per cent of the State appropriation for schools.	167,984
Indiana	To school in an adjoining district from one unable to maintain school with all available funds.	[2] 2	Not specified	110,985
Kansas	do	(1)	Three-fourths of difference (not to exceed $100 per district per year) between cost of transportation and tuition and all of district's available funds, including proceeds from a maximum levy.	
Maine [3]	To a neighboring school from 1 suspended because of low attendance.	(1)	$100 or less for any 1 school, not to exceed one-half the transportation cost.	
Massachusetts	To a high school in an adjoining town, from 1 (of less than 500 families) that does not maintain a high school.	(1)	One-half, three-fourths, or the total cost (depending on the local school tax) not to exceed 40 cents per pupil per day for transportation or board.	185,000
Michigan	To a school in a "rural agricultural district."	(1)	$400 per year per pupil, transportation vehicle used.	60,800
Minnesota	To schools in consolidated districts.	2	Amounts fixed by State board of education, not to exceed a maximum of $4,000 to any one school.	[4] 807,453
New Hampshire	For children living in unorganized territory.	(1)	Total cost	
New Jersey	To any school		75 per cent of cost approved by county superintendents.	1,516,621
New York	To union, consolidated, and central rural schools.	(1)	One-half cost in districts unable to maintain schools with a 5-mill tax.	

Footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 3.—*State aid for pupil transportation in 17 States*—Continued

State	Transportation for which grants are made	Minimum distance for which State funds are allowed (in miles)	Grants	Total 1928–29 (in dollars)
1	2	3	4	5
Pennsylvania	To any school	1½	75, 60, or 50 per cent of cost (depending on district valuation). Maximum amounts $4,000 or $3,000 per annum. Expenditure per pupil not to exceed $1 per day for board or transportation.	[4] 861, 625
South Carolina	To counties for transporting pupils to school over official transportation routes.	([5])	Appropriation for the school year 1930–31 to be apportioned to the counties of the State on basis of per pupil per mile of transportation on official transportation routes.	[6] 350, 000
Texas	To approved schools in consolidated districts meeting certain specified requirements.	([1])	One-half costs not to exceed $300 for each motor school bus used.	[7] 148, 785
Vermont	To any school	1½	Total cost, not to exceed $20 per pupil annually, or $1 per pupil per week for board in lieu of transportation, in a town district whose grand list does not exceed $5,000; in other town districts the expense is shared with the town in ratio 5,000 bears to that town district's valuation.	[4] 96, 000
Wisconsin	do	1	10 cents per day per child transported 1 mile; $1 per day for board in lieu of transportation for pupil 2 miles from school; $150 additional to a district for transporting its pupils (1 mile or more) to another school.	[8] 140, 542
Wyoming	do	([1])	50 per cent not to exceed $2,000,000 annually of the moneys received from the "Government royalty funds" is distributed to the counties on basis of number of teachers and school bus drivers employed.	----------

[1] Not stated.
[2] Pupils between the ages of 6 and 12 are transported distances over 1 mile.
[3] State also provides funds for transporting pupils to school in nonorganized territory.
[4] For the year 1927–28.
[5] No payments for fractions of a mile.
[6] Appropriated for the year 1930–31.
[7] For the year 1929–30.
[8] For the year 1926–27.

Transportation expense for which grants are made.—Column 2 designates the pupil transportation expense which is met in part or wholly by the State funds in each of 17 States. The funds may be used in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming for the expense of transporting pupils to any public school, but their use is limited in Connecticut, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and New York to the expense of transporting pupils to certain schools. For example, in Connecticut the State shares in the expense of transporting pupils to a high school located in a town adjoining that in which the pupil resides when no high school is maintained in his town. The appropriation in South Carolina specifies that the funds are to be used for transporting pupils over official transportation routes.

Minimum distance for which State funds are allowed.—Column 3 shows that in six States the expense of transporting pupils living nearer to school than the minimum distance specified is not shared by the respective States; in one the State funds are not used for fractions of a mile. Two States specify a minimum distance of 1 mile, two 1½ miles, and the other two specify 2 miles with the provision in one of them that it is 1 mile for pupils between the ages of 6 and 12 years.

Grants.—Column 4 shows how the State grants to school corporations for pupil-transportation expenditures are determined or the amounts of such grants. Bases for grants are as follows: In Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Vermont, operating costs; in Indiana and Kansas (grants only to weak districts), ability of the district to provide educational opportunities in relation to amount necessary to maintain specified standards; in Michigan and Wyoming, pupil-transportation vehicle used; and in Maine, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, definite amounts are granted.

Ten States pay, usually within prescribed limits and according to graduated rates, 50 per cent or more of the transportation costs. In Delaware, where practically the entire burden of school support is assumed by the State, the law provides that 11 per cent of the State school budget may be expended for "auxiliary agencies," one of which is transportation.

State grants are made in Indiana and Kansas to financially weak districts; in Maine to districts suspended because of low attendance, where normally such districts would use the aid for maintenance purposes.

The laws of Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin provide for using the transportation aid for boarding pupils in lieu of transportation when the school authorities consider this more feasible than transporting them. In one State, Pennsylvania, the law provides that the funds for transportation may be used for depreciation and upkeep of approved school buses, not to exceed $100 per vehicle per year.

The amounts shown in column 5 were obtained from reports of State departments of education, auditors' reports, and session laws from the respective States for the years indicated. The amount was not available for all States.

Additional expenditure of State funds for transportation.—In addition to the legal provisions listed in Table 3, statutory provision in a number of States permits the use of State funds for the transportation of atypical children to school. There are also a number of States, not named in the table, in which portions of large equalization funds are used for pupil transportation. Usually the statutes in such States

give general directions only concerning the apportionment of the funds, leaving wide powers to the officials who administer them.

Data are not available to show amounts expended for pupil transportation from the grants, but the following references indicate their significance:

> The Mississippi Legislature at its session of 1920 * * * made an additional annual appropriation of $1,268,721 for public schools to be disbursed by the State board of education * * * in such manner as to equalize school terms as nearly as possible. (State Department of Education. A Study in Educational Finance, Equalizing School Fund. Educational Finance Series No. 11, Jackson, Miss.)

Pupil transportation is one item of expense considered in distributing the Mississippi equalization fund which has approximately doubled in amount since 1920.

The 1929 equalization law of North Carolina provides that—

> In counties in which consolidation has necessitated transportation of pupils the salary cost shall also be increased by such sum as was actually expended the previous year in the transportation of pupils, not, however, to exceed the sum of $8 per pupil transported during said six month's period. The State board of equalization may upon proper showing increase the amount in excess of $8 per pupil, but not, however, in any event, to exceed 15 per cent of the salary cost.

CONCLUSIONS

Data presented in this study show that definite legal provision for State aid for current or capital outlay expenses of consolidated schools has been made in more than half of the States. The amount of aid is sufficient in most cases to be a material factor in financing these schools. Of even greater significance, however, is the general recognition of the fact that the matter of getting children into schools of approved types is worthy of promotion in the form of special aid from the State.

Legal provisions under which State funds are granted indicate that the grants are made with two objectives in mind: To encourage the consolidation movement and to equalize educational opportunity. The idea of encouraging the movement is probably responsible for the greatest proportion of the aid provided.

The study shows that the bases for apportionment include the school, size of school, the district, and the ability of the district to maintain school; the building (size and cost); cost of transportation, transportation vehicles used, and a specified tax levy.

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